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through Professor Hoernlé's international experience it will count for even less.

A. W. MOORE.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.

THE CONTROL OF PARENTHOOD. By various writers, edited by James Marchant. London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1921. Pp. xii, 203. Price, 7s. 6d. net.

The point of view of the contributors to this collection is so varied that the general public seeking for enlightenment may "come out by that same door wherein it went." There is no editing, in the strict sense of the word; and we look without guidance from one fact of the subject to another, and from the utterance of convinced Malthusians to ardent propaganda of rigid theologians; but the level of some of the contributions is high, and the earnestness and high purpose of all contributors is self-evident.

Though it cannot be said that the world is at present overpopulated, the problem of population and food supply is a burning one. The most diverse views are expressed as to the possibility of increasing the world's food supply; and optimists, such as Prince Kropotkin, have seen the solution of the problem in intensive culture. The natural checks of the past have been infanticide, famine, epidemics, and frequent wars; and the infant mortality of the middle ages was enormous. Parents, as Dean Inge observes, bore lightly the dismal procession of cradles and coffins as a dispensation of Providence; in many cases the mother also died early, worn out. Luther in a brutal passage says, "What matter? It is what she is there for."

During the industrial revolution in England the population increased with extraordinary rapidity. The most widespread prosperity was in the middle of the Victorian period, when the birth rate reached the maximum of 36.3 per thousand. But, as Mr. Havelock Ellis says, "the significance of this epoch was built over a Hell to which the imagination of Dante never attained." Children were sent out in tender years to increase their parents' income, and the employers said "Amen." "Those who have gone deeply into natural history," adds Professor J. A. Thomson, "say that foxes approve of large families among rabbits." In the middle years of the Victorian period there were "overpopu-

lation" meetings, and while men were arguing how to stem the torrent of babies, the birth rate began to fall in 1877 and the movement of decreasing birth rate is now common to all highly civilised nations. Leaving on one side contributory causes of this decline, the Registrar General for England has made the statement that nearly 70 per cent of the drop must be ascribed to voluntary restriction.

This existing voluntary restriction is the subject of the present symposium. Ecclesiastical teaching regards restriction by contraceptives and modern preventives as a grave evil. In the *Report of the Declining Birth-rate* (1916), certain ecclesiastical authorities recommend that where husband and wife for any cause desire to limit their family they should confine their intercourse to the period in the month when conception is improbable, this method of birth control (pp. 358 and 403) is declared to be "natural," while on pages 386 and 401 it is plainly stated that this method is legitimate because its success is uncertain. In other words (as Mr. Harold Cox observes) no sin is committed in trying to dodge the Divine ordinance which connects sexual intercourse with procreation, provided only an off-chance is left for the will of God to operate (!) (p. 85).

The whole problem is created by the fact that in the reproductive instinct we have the strongest instance of what Metchnikoff calls the maladaptations caused by civilisation. Turning to Dean Inge's interesting paper on the economic aspects, there is no overt condemnation of artificial restriction of the birth rate. He indicates, however, that there may "easily be a great outbreak of outwardly decent licentiousness, protected by the new methods of avoiding its consequences, and perhaps even a toleration of abnormal practices which Christian ethics greatly diminished or drove underground" (p. 65). Dr. Mary Scharleib, though with no theological bias, protests against the limitation of families as "wrong and dangerous," and not "really in the interest of overburdened mothers." But she is inclined to rely too much upon the beneficial action of an Utopian and omnipotent state and vague talk about "intensive cultivation, chemical and electrical." The Bishop of Birmingham, also, is content to throw the burden upon the State, which is to see to it that every child shall be cared for so that inefficients shall be almost unknown (p. viii). The economists and biologists regard, on the other hand, the restriction of the birth rate as the beneficial result of the application of

human reason to the problem of overpopulation; parents practising birth control are, as it were, "conducting" lightning to the ground. Professor Arthur Thomson shares the view of Mr. Havelock Ellis that birth control within limits makes for progress and is likely to continue to do so, being not race suicide, but race saving, and suggests that the dangers associated with birth control are in a process of being reduced, "though the substitution of mechanical control for moral control can never be regarded with *entire* equanimity." It will be clear that antagonistic as are the conclusions of the various contributors, this little book, representing all schools of opinion, deserves to be widely read.

F. B.

THE LETTERS OF WILLIAM JAMES. Edited by his son, Henry James. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1920. In two volumes, Vol. I, pp. xvi, 348; Vol. II, pp. 382. Price, 42s. net.

These letters, which are chiefly informal and intimate, and cover the activity of William James from his boyhood to his death, are prefaced by an introduction which gives indispensable information about his ancestry and upbringing. There is no doubt that James's native mobility and detachment of mind were strengthened by the influences of his home and early travel, though his fresh and inquiring intelligence could not have been permanently confined by any schooling. His early education was a matter of shreds and patches picked up in New York, Boulogne and Geneva. His father, the elder William James, was an enemy to priggishness; "I had rather," he declared, "have a son of mine corroded with all the sins of the decalogue than have him perfect," and his peculiar temperament stimulated the intelligence and individuality of his sons. William James could not for a time find his vocation, and knocked at the doors of art and medicine. According to Mr. Santyana, he retained in these a professional touch and an unconscious ease which he hardly acquired in metaphysics; "I suspect" (Santyana adds), "he had heartily admired some of his masters in those other subjects, but had never seen a philosopher whom he would have cared to resemble. His excursions into philosophy were of the nature of raids." To some of his brother philosophers, especially to those of absolutist and rationalistic camps, James always remained an enigma and an amateur. The fact that James began by teaching

Vol. XXX—No. 4.